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Public meeting set on plans to save endangered fish species

Big turnout of Northwest citizens expected

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Bonneville Power Administration

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KALISPELL, Mont. – The first ocean-to-headwater analysis of actions to save endangered salmon, steelhead and resident fish in the Columbia River will get a public airing in Kalispell on Wednesday, March 1. This draft analysis, known as the All-H Paper, addresses factors that affect imperiled species: hatcheries, harvest, hydropower and habitat.

The Kalispell meeting will be held in the Winchester and Colt 44 Rooms of the Outlaw Inn, 1701 Highway 93 South, with signup for public comment at 6 p.m. and an overview presentation at 6:30 p.m., to be followed by questions and answers and a comment period. The Kalispell event is the eighth in a series of 15 public meetings scheduled in the four Northwest states and Alaska in February and March. A schedule is attached.

"The All-H Paper contains alternatives that the region can follow in implementing a plan to save weak stocks of fish," said Will Stelle, regional director of the National Marine Fisheries Service. "For the first time, federal agencies responsible for directing the recovery will have a unified plan. Because it will touch the lives of everyone in the region, we are seeking the advice of Northwest residents."

A draft environmental impact statement on the lower Snake River and a report on drawdown at John Day Dam, both authored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will also be

on the meeting agenda. The lower Snake River draft EIS focuses on options for improving salmon passage on the lower Snake River. The John Day Drawdown report evaluates drawdown of John Day and discusses whether or not drawdown merits further study because of potential benefits to fish recovery. That report includes a preliminary recommendation for no further study of drawdowns at John Day.

"The federal agencies recognize the urgency and importance of recovering salmon and steelhead," said Brig. Gen. Carl A. Strock, commander of the Corps' Northwestern Division. "We want citizens of the entire region involved to understand the actions being proposed and participate in identifying the tradeoffs that will have to take place to reach recovery."

The All-H Paper analyzes and proposes alternative approaches to improving habitat, harvest and the operations of dams and hatcheries. When it becomes final later this year, it will guide the actions of the

National Marine Fisheries Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The four alternatives defined in the All-H Paper are:

1. Removal of the four lower Snake River dams (one of the options in the Corps' Lower Snake EIS) with little increased effort in other areas;
2. Harvest constraints along with existing hydro and habitat efforts;
3. Aggressive actions in all Hs without breaching the four lower Snake River dams;
4. Maximum protections in all Hs, including dam breaching.

The plan that emerges later this year will be one of the largest environmental improvement efforts in the world, costing Northwest electricity ratepayers more than \$400 million a year. Additional funding will come through the congressional appropriations process.

The format of the meetings will allow ample opportunity for public comment. The meetings will follow an open-house format, with informative exhibits on each of the Hs and the alternatives contained in the All-H Paper and the Corps' draft EIS. Many experts will be on hand to answer questions and explain documents.

Oral comments will be recorded at the meeting. Written comments will be received at the meeting or by mail. All comments are treated equally. The comment period on the All-H Paper closes March 17. The comment period for the Corps' draft EIS closes on March 31. The following is the schedule for the Kalispell meeting:

6 pm: Open House/Sign-up for Public Comments

6:30-7:30 pm: Overview Presentation of Conservation of Columbia Basin Fish and Questions and Answers

7:30 pm: Public Comment Session (3 minutes per person)

Please check the website for updates www.bpa.gov/federalcaucus or call 1-888-921-4886.

Any persons having special needs for any of the public meetings may contact Jessi Phelps at (509) 358-7421 or via email at federalcaucus@bpa.gov. There will also be a small space available at the information tables for public interest/citizen groups to share written materials. Contact Jessi Phelps at the above number to reserve a space.

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Public Meeting Schedule

February 3, 2000

<p>Portland, Oregon</p> <p>Holiday Inn @ the Airport</p> <p>8439 NE Columbia Boulevard</p> <p><i>Columbia Conference Center-Willamette Room, John Q Hammons Hall, Foyer</i></p> <p>(503) 256-5000</p> <p>noon</p>	
<p>February 8, 2000</p> <p>Kalispell, Washington</p> <p>DoubleTree Hotel</p> <p>322 N. Kalispell Falls Court</p> <p><i>Grand Ballroom</i></p> <p>(509) 455-9600</p> <p>noon</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>February 10, 2000</p> <p>Lewiston, Idaho</p> <p>Williams Conference Center</p> <p>8th Avenue 6th Street</p> <p><i>Selway River Room & Snake River Room</i></p> <p>(208) 799-2357</p> <p>noon</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>
<p>February 15, 2000</p> <p>Astoria, Oregon</p> <p>Clatsop County Fair Grounds</p> <p>92937 Walluski Loop</p> <p><i>Multi-Purpose Arena/Exhibit Hall</i></p> <p>(503) 325-4600</p> <p>5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>February 17, 2000</p> <p>Tri-Cities (Pasco), Washington</p> <p>DoubleTree Hotel</p> <p>2525 North 20th Avenue</p> <p><i>Medallion 1 & 2</i></p> <p>(509) 544-3934</p> <p>noon</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>
<p>February 23, 2000</p> <p>Boise, Idaho</p> <p>Centre on the Grove</p> <p>850 West Front Street</p> <p><i>The Summit & Flying Hawk Eyrie</i></p> <p>(208) 336-8900</p> <p>noon</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>February 29, 2000</p> <p>Seattle, Washington</p> <p>Seattle Center</p> <p>200 Thomas Street</p> <p><i>Seattle Center Pavilion</i></p> <p>(206) 684-8582</p> <p>noon</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>

<p>March 1, 2000</p> <p>Kalispell, Montana</p> <p>Outlaw Inn</p> <p>1701 Highway 93 South</p> <p><i>Winchester Room & Colt 44 Room</i></p> <p>(406) 755-6100</p> <p>6:00 p.m.</p>	<p>March 2, 2000</p> <p>Missoula, Montana</p> <p>DoubleTree Hotel</p> <p>100 Madison</p> <p><i>Blackfoot Room & Bitterroot Room</i></p> <p>(406) 728-3100</p> <p>6:00 p.m.</p>
<p>March 6, 2000</p> <p>Ketchikan, Alaska</p> <p>Ted Ferry Civic Center</p> <p>888 Venetia Avenue</p> <p>(907) 228-5655</p> <p>5:30 p.m.</p>	<p>March 7, 2000</p> <p>Idaho Falls, Idaho</p> <p>Shilo Inn</p> <p>780 Lindsay Boulevard</p> <p><i>Yellowstone Room & Grand Teton Room</i></p> <p>(208) 523-0088</p> <p>5:30 p.m.</p>
<p>March 7, 2000</p> <p>Sitka, Alaska</p> <p>Westmark Hotel</p> <p>330 Seward Street</p> <p><i>Conference Room 1 & Lobby</i></p> <p>(907) 747-6241</p> <p>5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>March 8, 2000</p> <p>Twin Falls, Idaho</p> <p>Weston Plaza</p> <p>1350 Blue Lakes Blvd. N.</p> <p>Blue Lakes, Shoshone, Pomerelle, Teton & Sawtooth Rooms</p> <p>(208) 733-0650</p> <p>5:00 p.m.</p>

<p>March 8, 2000</p> <p>Juneau, Alaska</p> <p>Centennial Hall Convention Center</p> <p>101 Egan Drive</p> <p><i>Sheffield Ballroom 1, 2</i></p> <p>(907) 586-0485</p> <p>5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>March 9, 2000</p> <p>Petersburg, Alaska</p> <p>City Council Chambers Municipal Building</p> <p>12 South Nordic Drive</p> <p>(907) 772-4511 x23</p> <p>5:30 p.m.</p>
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